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REMARKS

UPON A PLAN FOR THE TOTAL

ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

IN THE UNITED STATES.

BY A CITIZEN OF NEW-YORK.

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Wm. Crockett, Esq. Aug 7 1867.

TOTAL ABOLITION
OF
SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES.

AN era is now approaching for the accomplishment of this important object, which, from the nature of things, can never so conveniently occur again. The anticipated national fund of surplus revenue seems now to have become a subject of great consideration throughout the union, and the curtailment and distribution of it, a source of much excitement. The southern portion of the United states strenuously contend that the surplus revenue, raised through the instrumentality of the Tariff, after a sufficiency to defray the expenses of government, is unconstitutional, and materially detrimental to them; they therefore formidably protest against it. The manufacturers, and other large classes of the north, finding the Tariff very beneficial, contend with equal zeal for its continuance. This subject has brought the two great southern and northern interests into an unfortunate collision, producing much agitation.

According to the restrictive principles of foreign trade, injuriously operating upon us, it is difficult to say how far we are not obliged to keep up a *counteracting* policy, consistent with the dignity of our country, without being obliged to raise more revenue than is merely necessary for the expenses of government; if this is unavoidable, it then becomes important to so dispose of the surplus revenue as may be least objectionable to all parties, and best calculated to allay the unhappy controversies existing in the country. An appropriation of it for the *extinguishment of slavery*, does appear to

be one of the most fortunate and desirable remedies for this difficulty that could possibly have been thought of. The adoption of this measure would tend to sink the doctrine of Nullification, and put an end to the present angry discussion in our national councils respecting the Tariff, now creating strong sectional variances in the Union, injurious to our social compact, and highly derogatory to the dignity of our government.

It is recommended that the surplus revenue should be applied to assist the states to purchase those slaves who are willing to be removed, at the expense, and under the superintending care of our government, to some eligible spot in Africa, their mother country, the land of their ancestors, with suitable provision for a comfortable subsistence. This would be a wise and magnificent act of national humanity and benevolence unprecedented in the history of the world, at the same time expunging a most *disgraceful stain* upon the character of this country for holding upwards of 2,000,000 of its fellow beings in bondage.

It cannot be, in this enlightened age, that the slave can be kept ignorant of the sublime theory of liberty, when missionaries and other free agents are preaching and emblazoning to them all its poetical beauties, and attractions, under a pretence of religious duty; but which is, by the bye, a most cruel, mistaken, and ill-timed charity, in their present vassalage. It only serves to embitter their feelings, adding to their unhappiness, by making them discontented and rebellious, without furnishing any adequate relief.

It cannot be possible, according to the immutable principles of human nature, when those *fettered* beings understand their natural rights, that they can be kept submissive and tranquil, in slavery. Most conclusive and melancholy proofs of this fact may be found in the late insurrections. They have dreadfully signalized their vengeance with conflagration, bloodshed and murder. In their slaughter, whole families have been massacred, even to infant children.

This horrid fatality is only a prelude to the gathering of a more tremendous storm, threatening to burst forth with desolating fury. This frightful aspect may be the more fearfully dreaded, from the existing state of that miserable race, composing as they do, so large and formidable a portion of the population of the southern states. It is idle and hopeless for the slave holders ever again to rest in peace and contentment, until slavery is abolished.

Let it be asked, what provokes the slave to such shocking deeds? Is he fighting for that liberty which is an inheritance he received from the Creator? Is he struggling to break asunder those chains put upon him by the crafty devices of a more intelligent being?

If he sheds human blood for it, does he not, for pardon, supplicate heaven that sent him on earth upon equality with all others? Is the slave but a reptile that he is to be immolated and trampled upon with impunity? Is he so worthless a being as to be entitled to no consideration? Does his color degrade him to be an abomination to this land? Are his cries for emancipation to pass unheeded by a nation flourishing under *unparalleled blessings of providence*—whose constitution declares equal rights to all men? Is he to be subjected to a restrained accountability to the God that made him, by the criminal avarice of a more wise and calculating fellow being? What man can hesitate to acknowledge the culpability of this glorious republic, that boasts of its independence, its free institutions, its civil and religious liberty over all the nations of the earth, to be indifferent to the freedom of more than 2,000,000 of its people held in degrading servitude? It is but a mockery and parade of principle, revolting to the feelings of humanity. It is hoped a consciousness of such injustice will be awakened, and but one voice raised in its behalf, as from the thundering cannon's mouth, to rouse the soul of every true hearted American to action, from Maine to Florida.

It is well ascertained that the employment of free labor—labor-saving implements of husbandry, and working cattle, which *expe-*

rience, in all countries, has proved to be the best means of cultivating the earth, shows that these poor creatures could well be set free, and spared from our soil, to compose a community of themselves, in their *our own country*, there to remain happy and unmolested to the end of time.

This country, while a British colony, induced its citizens to invest their capital in slaves, which necessarily become a part of the confederation, when our independence was achieved. It would now be a great hardship to take from them that property without giving a fair remuneration. How admirably then, does this plan present itself, of appropriating the surplus revenue for the extinguishment of slavery, securing additional prosperity, tranquillity and happiness to the planter, preserving good-fellowship, and harmony throughout the Union.

Our last census shows there are more than 2,000,000 of slaves in the United States; near 2,000,000 of those belong to Maryland, Virginia, Missouri, North Carolina, South-Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Arkansas, and Florida, whose united free population amount only to 3,692,107. Showing that the slaves constitute much more than one half of the whole number of that section of the country, where reside nearly all the opponents of the Tariff system, the principle source of surplus revenue, and who will receive almost exclusively the whole benefits of its distribution for this important object of general emancipation.

The following non slave-holding states, viz. Maine, Massachusetts, New-Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, Connecticut, New-York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Michigan, have a free population of more than 7,000,000, and only about 6,790 slaves, which is less than one slave to a thousand free men.

Estimating the whole number of slaves, for example, to average 50 dollars each, would amount to 100,000,000 of dollars, although it will be hereafter seen that the planters can well afford to take less than one half of that sum.

According to the secretary of the Treasury's report, our government can very conveniently, on the 3d of March, 1833, pay all the national debt; then, if the present tariff should continue, there will be after paying 13,500,000 dollars for government expenses a surplus revenue of 16,500,000 dollars for the year 1833, which would purchase the whole number of slaves in less than six years, and pay the expenses of their colonization. But supposing the surplus revenue is diminished by reducing the tariff, about which there is so much anxiety, 4,500,000 dollars and then 2,000,000 should be appropriated to meet exigences after paying actual government expenses, that would leave 10,000,000 to be annually applied for the abolition of slavery which would effect its object in about ten years. It is not at all improbable, however, but what this great act of national munificence from feelings of general philanthropy and motives of good policy among the States, who will be disposed to make great sacrifices, might be accomplished for one half, and perhaps less than the above estimate, if so, it would allow of a further salutary reduction of the tariff, without impeding the progress of abolition and colonization of all the colored people.

It cannot be reasonably supposed that the slave-holders could object to this proposition, when it is very evident that they would not only be much *happier* but much *enriched* by acquiescing in it and could well afford to sell their slaves at a very low price, notwithstanding they may hold them very high. Allow, for example, each plantation to average 150 slaves, and the expenses of their maintenance annually to be 6,300 dollars to which add 1,350 dollars, the annual interest at six per cent on the whole amount of 150 slaves, valued at 150 dollars each, making 7,650 dollars, being the total amount of the annual expenses of slave cultivation. Free labor---labor-saving implements of husbandry and working cattle employed to do the work of 150 slaves, in the ordinary mode of agriculture including all expenses, would only amount annually to

1,800 dollars, exclusive of 450 dollars, (being the annual interest on 7,500 dollars which the government pays the planter for every 150 slaves,) clearly showing that the planter makes an annual saving by substituting free for slave culture, of *six thousand three hundred dollars*, independent of all the profit of his plantation. With the ratio of 150 slaves to the plantation, and allowing only 13,500 plantations, there would be an annual aggregate gain to the whole southern planters, exclusive of all the additional profits arising from the products of their lands 85,050,000 dollars. The planter, to be convinced of the utility of agreeing to the proposed measure or a *modified* one from government, need but refer to the condition of the British West India colonies for *valuable* information. They are in the most *deplorable* situation imaginable in relation to their slaves. The writer can speak from experience upon this subject, having recently resided in the colonies between two and three years, and availed himself of the opportunity to be informed as to the positive and relative situation of the slave, and also the planter, and comparing the two together it was a matter of considerable contrariety of opinion, which was the most to be commiserated. Religious incendiaries of sedition are sent among them with missionarial functions to rouse the slave to an independent exercise of what they preach to them to be, their natural rights. This poisons their minds against their masters and makes them savage for revenge, hence follow insurrections upon insurrections, with a wanton sacrifice of lives and property until the planter scarcely knows when he lays his head down to rest, but that his repose may end in death.

The writer frequently suggested to the planters the great advantage of using labor-saving utensils of agriculture, and working cattle instead of so many slaves, which was always *admitted*, but the answer invariably was, that as there was a constant fear that parliament would liberate them, they could not sell them, and as they were obliged to keep and maintain them, they must keep them

employed in the usual way, although at a ruinous expense.

Not long since, the British Colonies (particularly,) were very flourishing; their products were profitable, and their slaves very valuable; but now, the colonies are languishing, the produce profitless; and the slaves, a *burthen* upon the planter, and what is the reason? Other regions by economical free labor can supply England's demands with similar produce, at less prices than the slave colonies; and British Legislation has *threatened* general emancipation to the slaves, which renders them valueless. The planters are constantly petitioning parliament for redress and earnestly praying, that as the government *originally induced* them to purchase the slaves, it would not now take from them that property, to their utter ruin, without giving them a reasonable compensation. Those prayers have not yet been attended to, and with Great Britain's *embarrassments* of upwards of 4,000,000,000 dollars of public debt, and an annual tax of 242,622,484 dollars, it is not probable those prayers will ever be granted. The planters further zealously petition, that, as the slaves constitute such an *overwhelming* majority of their population, if they should be set free in the colonies, from their utter ignorance of all moral obligations to observe a social compact of society, they would become *brigands* and *marauders* of such total *insubordinate* character as to render it necessary for the planters to abandon their estates and quit the colonies for safety. They further petition that parliament will deliberate *wisely* and *temperately* upon this subject and not rashly jeopardize the very existence and well being of their colonial possessions. This is truly the wretched situation of the colonial planters, and with truth it may be said, the present generation do not deserve the sacrifice that threatens them. The government, at a former period, from a want of consciousness of the *crime* they were then committing, authorised and encouraged the ancestors to import the **Africans** for the sake of their labor in cultivating the West India plantations. Is it not then an unpardonable act of cruelty to so se-

verely punish the innocent descendants for the sins of their forefathers?

When the writer visited England from the colonies, he was constantly astonished to find the Wilberforceans, or saints, as they were called, influenced by the wildest enthusiasm upon the sublime theory of liberty; urging immediate emancipation of the slave, and yet totally uninformed as to its destructive consequences to their future welfare, in their present uneducated condition, without some provision being made to so enlighten them that they may be enabled to estimate religious obligations and distinguish between right and wrong; otherwise it would be indispensable to have strong military posts and constant martial law to preserve order, and prevent a murderous anarchy and lawless confusion. It is not anticipated that this state of things could ever be consummated in the United States; but it may afford a very salutary lesson in guiding our consideration of similar occurrences that may take place.

From late melancholy experience the Virginians have become *panic struck* at a continued system of slavery and under the most frightful forebodings of a dreadful destiny fast approaching, have imploringly petitioned for legislative aid to save them from the impending danger.

The Virginia memorialists hold three propositions to be fully proved---first, "that the labor of the slaves is the most expensive that can be used;"---secondly, "that slavery tends to lay waste the region in which it subsists;"---and thirdly, "that it fills with apprehension and inquietude the bosoms of those who employ it." They then ask, "is not this literally and mournfully true?" They further pray that "a sense of the common interest, a love of peace, the sentiment of security for all that is dear to the heart of social man, combine to adjure Virginians to make a great, a becoming sacrifice to deliver their soil from an evil, serious now, terrible in prospect." They further hold the following language. "It is most clear, then, that the public interest and the safety of individu-

als call aloud for energetic but prudent measures, having for their objects the ultimate extinction of involuntary servitude, and the removal of the race which is irreconcilably antagonists to ours. Your memorialists will not dwell upon those high topics of republican consistency which addresses themselves to the understanding, the pride, and the conscience of this people ; nor presume to shew that the law of God is strikingly coincident on this all interesting subject with the welfare of man."

"They believe that your wisdom is competent to devise a plan that will lead to the happy result to which they allude ; and that the resources of the state are equal to its execution. They furthermore believe the citizens of the common wealth will manfully and cheerfully sustain their representatives in this momentous effort, and bear, without a murmur, the privations and impositions incident to it."

"Your memorialists pledge themselves and those whose organs they are, to a cordial co-operation in this great work, involving, as it does, the peace and happiness, the prosperity and glory of Virginia."

This memorial speaks a language that addresses itself, not only to Virginia, but to the heart and magnanimity of the whole nation. She is willing with her commendable proud spirit to struggle alone and single handed for her salvation. Is there not a nobleness of soul in such an exertion in a sister state that is worthy of succour in distress ? Is there an American who does not sympathise with ill-fated Virginia ? whose heart does not swell with feelings of condolence for the State, so conspicuous in achieving our independence—whose illustrious statesmen so distinguished themselves in sustaining the honor of our country, who have so signally adorned our national councils with their eloquence, and whose soil is the birth place of a WASHINGTON ? Already are her councils upon this subject, agitated with a distracting debate.

Delaware alarmed at her own fate from the late melancholy disturbances, is about following the course of Virginia.

Are the all powerful mediatorial intercessions of Congress to be withheld while witnessing such heart-rending struggles of our sister states to rid themselves of the *curse visited* upon them, and spend its time in debating *minor* questions of political expediency and financial economy with an overflowing treasury? No!--heaven forbid it!

The constitutional parental care, with which Congress is invested, over the whole union can not see the welfare and happiness of the Southern States threatened with destruction, without affording its benevolent interpositions.

The resolution introduced into Congress as a remedy does not strike at the root of the evil but merely affects the branch: it only goes to remove and colonize the free people of color; and does not provide for the total liberation and colonization of the slaves.

It is earnestly desired that Congress without hesitation, before it adjourns, will create such a national abolition fund out of our overflowing treasury as may be amply sufficient to meet all the exigencies that may arise to complete this magnificent undertaking and be in readiness to assist all those states in this cause who have not sufficient resources of their own; and continue its perseverance until there is a total extinction of slavery in the United States, and a colonization of this unfortunate race in Africa or elsewhere is effected upon the most desirable terms practicable.

Our learned jurist, Chief Justice Marshall, and our distinguished statesman, Mr. Madison, are of the opinion Congress possesses constitutional powers to appropriate public funds to aid this redeeming project of colonizing the colored people, notwithstanding, serious doubts are entertained upon that subject, and measures are about to be taken in Congress to so amend the constitution as to give the requisite power to afford assistance. But it is much to be feared, from the anxious solicitude now prevailing, to extinguish the surplus revenue that the means of accomplishing this grand scheme

will be entirely legislated away before this constitutional authority can be obtained. If ever a case occurred, more unexceptionable than all others, it is this, "where the end would justify the means;" and when the bold doctrine of necessity could be excusably pleaded for using prompt remedies for great national evils, and for the cause of humanity.

From the ungovernable excitement that now exists in some of the southern States, delay would be attended with horrible consequences and most perplexing embarrassments.

If this plan of abolition and colonization of the slaves, or a *modified one*, should not be adopted while government possesses the abundant means to do it, it will ever be a matter of *deep repentance*: not only will the southern States, but the whole Union at no distant day, have serious cause to regret it. The same conciliating spirit of good fellowship that originally bound with solemn league the sovereign states together, should now govern Congress in its deliberations and prevent the opposing of any useless obstacles to the success of this measure.

Entertaining a proper patriotic pride for the honor and dignity of our national character, it cannot reasonably be questioned, but that ere long, like the philanthropic Wiberforces and Buxtons of England, who have with an honest conviction so far pushed the popular doctrine of emancipation in Parliament as to *destroy* all faith in the slave property and *stability* of the colonial government. We may find the Wilberforces and Buxtons of our own country with similar feelings, emboldened to overlook constitutional scruples introducing the same *popular doctrines* into Congress with similar effects upon the southern portion of our Union.

That a praiseworthy zeal for universal abolition of slavery is now rapidly increasing in all Christian countries is undeniable, and that *we* should be found dilatory in so noble a cause would now be incompatible with the exalted rank we hold with foreign nations.

The Colonization Society has done much for the cause of hu-

manity. They deserve the thanks of the whole nation for the progress they have made in removing thousands of the unfortunate race of colored people to the colony of Liberia and providing them with suitable establishments for their comfortable subsistence. Yet with their limited means and sole dependance on voluntary contributions they never can be able to effect a completion of their noble and humane designs without the liberal aid of the general government.

The slave cannot reasonably oppose this plan for their amelioration. Their experience must teach them that they never can hold in the society of this country a standing suitable to their wishes, but always one that they will naturally consider *degrading* and *mortifying*; as rational beings, then, the conclusion is inevitable; that they will be disposed to hail this benign overture for bettering their situation in their mother country with joyous acclamation and gratitude. Forgetting the name of slave, they should be conveyed to the land where lay the bones of their ancestors---an asylum for the oppressed, there to repose in peace and independence under the sunshine of pleasing hopes, with fair assurance of uninterrupted happiness in this world, and unblighted prospects for the world to come. May they find it the retreat of Elysium---a paradise of unexampled blessing---a region of sweets favored with heaven's unceasing smiles and abounding with the utmost profusion of the luxuries of creation, in order that they may be *somewhat compensated* for the painful *privations* they have been barbarously subjected to by the *infernal slave-trader*---the most *accursed* of the damned, who first dragged them in chains from their native land, exiles from home, from relations and friends. Dear to them will be a return to Afric's genial climes, where first their fathers breathed, where last may breath their sons; yet dearer still will be to them, the pure untainted breath of *freedom*.

That the slaves should continue to be held in bondage for a much longer period is an abhorrent idea, it is irreconcilable with every principle that constitutes this republic a glorious nation.

If it can possibly be supposed that the project of colonization should fail, and the blacks are liberated and left to form a part of our community with equal rights as freemen, as they become enlightened their natural desire will be to have themselves *represented* by their *own* color, and claim to have *seats* in our legislature with the white people. Without meaning any unjust reflection, will such a step be *tolerated* under the peculiar formation of our society? and yet will not the resistance of it engender hazardous jealousies, and produce a much to be lamented inharmonious state of things? And it is by no means certain, but that the *aspiring* political demagogue of party, to gratify his own ambition, may be found to advocate their claims to those privileges, in order to have the benefit of their influence in promoting his own views, regardless of its unhappy tendencies when they can have 2,000,000 of people to appeal to. The late attempt to establish a university for the education of colored people in Connecticut, may, with propriety be referred to as illustrative of the possibility of the foregoing remark. Again, on another hand, it cannot be an agreeable reflection, that the colored part of our population promises so much to increase from too great a philanthropic courteous *overlooking* of the distinctions of color. This fact is notorious in all countries where slavery exists, and in our own, it has already become very conspicuous by the several hundred thousands reported in our last census. Those constitute an intermediate race, not acknowledged as companions of the whites, yet too superior to associate cordially with the blacks.

From reasonable calculation it appears that the colored population so much more rapidly increases than the white that the present generation may witness its becoming a very questionable fact whether this may be considered a nation of white or a colored people as regards the southern States, and the same period may exhibit the republic visited by a servile rebellion of extermination, a sad victim of degeneracy. God forbid, our future history should ever have occasion to record such a calamity.

Looking at this momentous subject in all points of view whether the general government should assist to purchase and colonize the slaves appears to present itself in such a formidable shape that the heart and mind under all considerations are brought to the irresistible conclusion that no time should be lost in its immediate commencement. Let no useless impediment palsy the arm of government in applying this remedy, now is the time or never to guard against it while the means are in her possession. Suffer this opportunity to pass by, after our revenue is diminished to meet the mere expenditure of government, and we *never again can raise a tax* from the people adequate to such a purpose. The completion of this noble work will be hailed as a *national jubilee*, second only to the declaration of our independence.

